

Orphans and other vulnerable children are deprived of the single most important factor in their lives—their family or their parents.

By 2010, an estimated 106 million children under age 15 are projected to lose one or both parents. Among them, the number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS is expected to jump to more than 25 million.

These orphans and other vulnerable children now live throughout sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Conflict has orphaned or separated 1 million children from their families in the 1990s.

H.R. 4061 would help communities to ensure that orphans and other vulnerable children have a secure and healthy childhood by providing essential services, such as basic care, health services including treatment for children with HIV/AIDS, mental health care, school food programs, and job training.

Orphans and other vulnerable children are not especially visible because millions of children are dispersed over many families, in communities where the hardships of individual children are lost from sight.

H.R. 4061 will increase access to needed services, ensure parity for orphans and other vulnerable children and build local capacity for effective decentralization and targeting of services as well as multisectoral coordination among service providers.

H.R. 4061 would allow for school fees to be waived providing a free basic education policy for millions of orphans and vulnerable children, many of whom had never enrolled in school or had dropped out because they simply could not afford the school fees.

Due to their status, these children are often most vulnerable and at risk of becoming victims of violence, exploitation, trafficking, discrimination or other abuses. Unaccompanied girls are at especially high risk of sexual abuse.

Children orphaned by AIDS are themselves particularly vulnerable to infection because they often have no one to care for or protect them, or any means of earning a living.

A 2001 report by the International Crisis Group found that “young people with no job, no income, and no family to support them are at risk of joining, or being abducted by local militias.”

A young Sierra Leone youth told an audience at the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Children, “We want a better life. We want peace. We are counting on your governments and the UN’s continued support for help.”

H.R. 4061 would provide the help this young boy so desperately needs. I urge full passage of this amendment.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for this wonderful bill; we look forward to its passage; and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4061, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

JOBS AND THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the President of the United States made another trip to my State of Ohio to argue for and try to justify his economic policy.

Ohio has lost one out of six manufacturing jobs since George Bush took office. Ohio has lost almost 200 jobs every single day of the Bush administration. Yet the President’s answer invariably is more tax cuts for the wealthiest people, the most privileged people in the country, hoping that it trickles down and creates jobs. His other answer is more trade agreements, like the North American Free Trade Agreement, that continue to send jobs, continuing to hemorrhage jobs out of the country.

Mr. Speaker, instead of these failed economic policies that have cost Ohio more than 200,000 jobs, we need to extend unemployment benefits, pass Crane-Rangel that actually gives benefits and rewards those companies that manufacture in the United States rather than giving tax breaks to those companies that continue to ship jobs overseas.

□ 2000

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

ENERGY LEGISLATION NEEDED NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, often perception does not match reality. I believe that this is true in regard to our present economy.

Many would characterize the economy as very poor. However, as we can see on the following chart, short-term interest rates are the lowest in 40 years; inflation, according to the Producer Price Index, was 1.5 percent over the last 12 months; productivity expanded 5 percent the last four quarters, the highest in 20 years; manufacturing employment reached a 30-year high in May with orders up for manufacturing; and home ownership was 68.6 percent last quarter, which is a record.

All of these things would indicate a strong economy, so what is the problem? Why do people continually talk about what a bad economy we have? I would say that probably the main con-

cern that we hear is simply what one of the previous speakers referred to, unemployment.

I would like to call attention to the fact that during the 1970s, the unemployment rate was 6.2 percent for that 10-year average; during the 1980s, it was 7.3 percent; during the 1990s, it was 5.8 percent; and, today, in 2004, it stands at 5.6 percent. We added 248,000 new jobs to the economy in the month of May, and during the last 9 months of consecutive growth, we have added 1.5 million jobs to the economy.

Certainly this 5.6 percent rate is considerably lower than the 30-year average of 6.4 percent. Currently unemployment in the European Union runs 9 to 10 percent. So we see some remarkable gains, and it appears that even though we would hope that unemployment would be zero, we are at least moving certainly in the right direction.

This does not mean that the economy is not without challenge. We feel that there is one significant issue that needs to be dealt with, and that is the issue of energy policy. This is well within the purview and the domain of this particular body.

Currently we have higher energy prices, which affects trucking, airlines, agriculture, small business, manufacturing and individuals. Yet we cannot get an energy bill passed, even though there is widespread agreement on most of the provisions in the bill. I am going to put some of those issues up here that we think are a matter of considerable consensus.

In the energy bill that has been passed by the House and the Senate, yet we cannot get a conference report agreed upon, is the renewable fuel standard, which provides for wind energy, solar energy, ethanol, biodiesel, hydro, all environmentally friendly and will move us away from energy dependence upon OPEC. Also hydrogen fuel cell development is critical. This is environmentally friendly and is not dependent on petroleum.

The Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline, we have all kinds of natural gas available in our country today, particularly in Alaska, and we cannot access it, so this pipeline is critical to reducing natural gas prices, which are eating us up at the present time.

Finally, incentives to increase energy production. We have shut down our exploration and energy production, and that has certainly hurt the economy.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, the economy is strong, and Congress can fix the biggest obstacle to a period of sustained growth, the lack of a comprehensive energy policy. We can continue to blame the other party, Republicans blame Democrats, Democrats blame Republicans, we can blame the other body, they can blame us. We can do all of the finger pointing we want out there, but the buck really stops here. It is our responsibility, and the American people have every right to expect Congress to put the country’s welfare ahead of partisanship.

We need an energy bill passed, and we need it passed now. We can start on that this week. I am hoping that all of us here in this Congress can work together to put the national interests ahead of anything else and get this finished. There really are no excuses for not doing so.

RENEWING THE ASSAULT WEAPON BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, assault weapons go back on to the streets of America in 3 months. Time is running out to protect our police officers, our communities and our children. After September 13, criminals, drug dealers and gangs will be able to go and buy their assault weapons.

In this past week, we certainly brought back memories of President Ronald Reagan. I remember his contributions to gun safety. He understood the dangers of assault weapons, which is why he ushered in one of the first bans on military-style weapons, banning the importation of rapid fire shotguns. In 1989, President George H.W. Bush expanded this list to include 43 other assault weapons.

By 1994, with the country facing, unfortunately, a wave of mass shootings throughout this country, Congress finally banned the production or sale of new assault weapons. In a joint letter to the House Members pushing for passage of the ban, former President Reagan said, "We urge you to listen to the American public and to the law enforcement community and support a ban on the further manufacture of these weapons." As usual, President Reagan said it best.

Renewing the assault weapon ban is about the safety of our police, our children and our communities. Congress only has 28 more working days in which to renew the assault weapon ban.

Let me say this: When you think about the American people, when you think about police throughout this country, who are now lobbying the Members of Congress and the Senate to have this bill come up on the floor for a vote, and yet we still hear nothing. President Bush today has actually said that he would sign the bill if it gets on his desk.

Let me say this: This House needs to bring the bill up on to the floor for a vote so that it can go to the President's desk. The American people have to get involved in this issue. They have to contact their Members of Congress in the House and Senate.

We need to talk about what assault weapons can do. We need to talk about what the health care costs will be from the damage done if assault weapons are back on our streets. We need to talk about how many of our police in the

past have been killed because they were outgunned because of assault weapons. We need to remember our history to know why we passed the assault weapon ban 10 years ago.

We cannot allow this to sunset. We must make sure the assault weapon ban is kept in place. It is for the safety of our communities, our children, our police officers. The American people are always saying they have no part in government. You can have a part in government, but you have to become involved. You have to have your voices heard.

I will stand here every Tuesday, Monday, whenever, to make sure that the American people hear this message.

Today, June 14, is my son's birthday. Going back 10 years ago, when a mad man came onto a train and shot and killed my husband and shot my son in the head, we never thought Kevin would live. The criminal at that time had large capacity clips which could hold 14 bullets.

Some say it would not have made any difference on the Long Island massacre. Well, with the ban that is in place, even though it is 10 bullets in a clip, if you could talk to the people at the end of the train that lost their lives, if we had the 10-bullet ban in place, if we had the assault weapon ban in place, maybe we would have had a few of our people that would have lived that day.

I celebrate my son's birthday. It is a miracle that he is alive. That is why I came to Congress, to reduce gun violence in this country. I started my career by lobbying to make sure the assault weapon ban got in place here in Congress. I will continue to fight to make sure the assault weapon ban stays in place.

PROVIDING IRAQIS WITH BETTER OPPORTUNITIES THAN AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, last week the Associated Press reported that Iraqis are paying 5 cents a gallon for gas in Iraq, 5 cents. Why are Iraqis getting such a good deal? Because the American taxpayer is subsidizing the Iraqis to the tune of \$167 million a month, approximately \$500 million over 3 months.

Here in the United States on average Americans are paying over \$2 a gallon for gas, up approximately 50 cents since the beginning of the war in Iraq. Fill up a car with gas, a little north of \$50; yet in Iraq to do the same costs you about a dollar, what would cost us here \$50. We are subsidizing them, the American taxpayer, to the tune of \$167 million a month. Here in the United States, what have we done? Nothing.

I am not against building and rebuilding Iraq after the war, but I am opposed to providing Iraqis with a better opportunity than we provide Amer-

icans, and I am not just talking about gas prices.

Take health care. They have health care. We have opened up 150 health clinics and hospitals throughout Iraq, providing 100,000 with prenatal and infant coverage costing Americans taxpayers \$1 billion. In the United States, 44 million Americans are without health insurance; 33 million Americans work full-time without health care; 10 million American children are without health care. What do we do?

In the area of jobs, in Iraq we provide universal job training. In the United States, under the President's budget we cut \$238 million from job training programs.

Veterans in Iraq, \$60 million is being spent to train the Iraqi veterans from past wars.

□ 2015

In the United States, under the President's budget, we are cutting \$257 million from American veterans medical care.

In the area of education, in Iraq, we built 2,300 schools. In America, under the President's budget, we have underfunded by \$8 billion the Leave No Child Behind Act. In Iraq, universities are receiving \$20 million for higher education partnerships. In America, we have cut Perkins loans by \$90 million and frozen the Pell grants for 3 years in a row. That is the President's budget.

Police. In Iraq, we are spending \$500 million to retrain the police on security. In the United States, the COPS program for community policing throughout our country, supporting police officers, we have cut in the President's budget by \$659 million.

In the area of housing, in Iraq, we are spending \$470 million for public housing. In the United States, under the President's budget, we cut \$791 million from section 8.

The environment, \$3.6 billion in Iraq for water and sewer. In America, the President's budget cuts \$500 million from the revolving fund.

For roads, in Iraq, we are spending \$240 million on new roads and bridges. In America, the Army Corps of Engineers' budget is cut by 10 percent.

We could go on and on with program after program. My colleagues know that in the election of 2000, then Governor Bush, now President Bush, declared he was opposed to nation-building. Who knew it was America he was talking about when he said he was opposed to nation-building? But the good news is that in the 2004 reelection, President Bush can say he kept his commitment in opposition to nation-building. The problem is, it is here at home.

What do we have here at home? We have a higher unemployment rate than when he took office; more uninsured; college costs soaring now by 10 or 12 percent a year, on average. Health care costs for a family of four was \$6,500 3 years ago; today it is \$9,000. Yet in Iraq in the areas of health care, education,